

**2010 Census
Preliminary Plans for 2005 and 2006 Tests
April 2004**

For 2010 Census planning, we are in the process of defining our objectives for the 2005 and 2006 tests, and have begun identifying the things we need to learn.

During the working group sessions at the upcoming advisory committee meetings, discussions will focus on aspects of these plans that pertain to each group.

We will keep the committees informed as we work towards final objectives. All of these plans also are subject to funding levels we receive for FY 2005 and FY 2006, of course.

Preliminary Plans for the 2005 Tests

The 2005 tests both will be national tests similar to the 2003 National Census Test. For both, questionnaires will be sent by mail, but response modes will vary by test objectives. Operationally, such tests are less like a decennial census, but statistically they are nationally representative.

- o The National Content Survey (NCS) is being designed to test options for the short form questions for both 2010 and the 2008 ACS.
- o The National Census Test (NCT) is being designed to test additional methods for increasing census response.

We will not conduct any personal visit nonresponse followup for these two tests, though we likely will conduct some telephone follow-ups to help evaluate test results.

Census Day for both tests will be September 15, 2005.

For the 2005 National Content Survey, our preliminary plans include studies of:

New Coverage Questions

We need to continue the work we started in the 2004 Census Test in using coverage probes to address within household coverage. That is, we want to learn how to enhance the design of our coverage probes to address under coverage (at the household level) and over coverage (at the person level).

Wording and Presentation of the Residence Rules

We need to examine alternative presentations of the residence rules, focusing on language and forms design, as well as the broader conceptual issues associated with ensuring that our rules are understood and correctly applied by respondents.

U S C E N S U S B U R E A U

Design, Layout, Wording and Presentation of the Race and Ethnicity Questions

We need to study whether a shortened version of the Hispanic Origin and race questions, coupled with a write-in question on ancestry, will affect race distributions; detailed race reporting; plus item nonresponse and imputation rates for these items.

Revised Wording, Sequencing, Layout, and Response Categories for Some of the Short Form Items (e.g., age, relationship, sex, tenure)

We need to study whether we can improve the data quality for other short form items, by focusing on the wording, sequencing, layout and response categories for these items. Some of this testing is related to understanding potential modal effects between paper and electronic data collection methods.

Potential Modal Effects among Paper, Telephone, and Internet Data Collection Modes

We need to study what effects the optimization of layout, presentation, and sequence of questions by mode (especially electronic mode) has on data quality.

For the 2005 National Census Test, our preliminary plans include studies of:

Replacement Questionnaire Delivery Methods

We need to collect both production as well as response metrics on some potential methods for delivering a replacement questionnaire to non-respondents within the time and volume constraints that we will face in the 2010 Census.

Messages on Mail Components

We need to examine the impact on response and speed of response of various messages (about response deadlines; explanation on replacement questionnaire) on the various census mailing pieces (advance letters, questionnaires, reminder cards).

Electronic Options (Telephone and Internet) to Increase Response

Building on work we started in the 2003 Census Test, we need to examine the effects of at least two new approaches for providing respondents with electronic response alternatives. We're considering offering the option at the time of (1) the advance letter delivery, and (2) delivery of replacement mailing. Based on the 2003 results, these will be presented as alternatives to responding on paper. We are no longer pursuing approaches that only offer electronic response options.

Preliminary Plans for the 2006 Census Test

The 2006 Census Test will be a site test similar to the 2004 Census Test. Site tests are most like an actual decennial census from an operational perspective, though we don't conduct all operations in every test. On the other hand, such tests are not nationally representative, which limits our ability to generalize results.

For the 2006 Census Test, our preliminary plans include:

Data Collection Efforts on American Indian Reservations

We know from previous census results that these efforts need to address government-to-government relationships, effective outreach and promotion strategies, and indigenous recruiting and hiring. We also need to study automating field data collection on reservations.

Improving Census Coverage

We need to investigate this by testing procedures to address overall coverage of the population and housing, duplication and imputation problems, and by testing the sequencing and timing of field data collection operations that affect coverage quality.

This likely will encompass studies relating to the application/explanation of residence rules; followup visits for large households; studying whether administrative records can improve within-household coverage; testing computerized unduplication methods; studying our rules for what to include in the Coverage Followup operation; using automation to improve and speed up verification of potential deletes; and evaluating alternative statistical procedures for imputation.

Measuring Census Coverage

We need to study new and improved methods for measuring census coverage of persons, and also test improved coverage measurement estimation methods.

This likely will include studies relating to improving the quality of Census Day person residency designation; obtaining additional information to identify omissions and determine erroneous enumerations; determining and resolving the location of a person's Census Day residence for in-movers and for people with multiple addresses; and automating the Person Followup interview to improve ease of interview and resulting data quality, potentially including automated coding of interview results

We also need to study changes to the matching methods to incorporate the additional information collected in the Person Interview and Person Followup Interview used to identify census omissions, erroneous inclusions and correct Census Day residence for in-movers and persons with multiple residences; determine the correct vs. erroneous enumeration status for "non-data defined or insufficient information" persons (e.g., persons with a missing or incomplete name); extend the automated match and duplicate search from the local area (block and surrounding block) to the site level; and incorporate/examine duplicates identified by the census operations

We also need to study whether conducting the Coverage Measurement Person Interview as soon as the Nonresponse Followup operation is complete adversely affects the census data (since not all census operations will have been completed at this point).

Automating Field Data Collection

We need to study the feasibility and effectiveness of using Hand Held Computers for both new functionality and improved functionality compared to the 2004 Census Test. For example, we are considering updating address lists and maps, payroll data entry, management reports for management staff, access to multiple assignments (for apartment mix-ups), search by name/address capability (for apartment mix-ups), and improved quality control/reinterview processes. We also need to study a more cost effective data collection support infrastructure by examining the space requirements to support automated data collection field activities, and by examining the LCO staff requirements needed to support automated data collection field activities.

In addition, we want to study a more efficient sequencing and timing of follow-up operations. For example, by examining the feasibility and effectiveness of conducting a field data collection operation that supports both nonresponse followup enumeration and an independent confirmation of vacant and deleted housing units identified by that enumeration.

Languages Other Than English

With respect to language, we need to study new methods for fulfilling needs of respondents who don't speak English. For the 2006 test we are looking at use of bilingual questionnaire delivery, language questionnaire fulfillment on request, and enhanced language assistance.

Mailing Replacement Questionnaires

We need to study reactions to different approaches for mailing replacement questionnaires to households that do not respond to the initial mailout.

While we will primarily use the 2005 National Content Test to demonstrate we can implement a scalable replacement mailing strategy, given realistic 2010-like time constraints, in the 2006 test we need to study the effects of delivering a blanket replacement questionnaire for part of a test site. While we do not currently envision using a blanket approach in 2010, we do need to study public reaction to a blanket replacement strategy.

Improving Data Collection Methods in Group Quarters

We need to study improving data collection methods in group quarters through the use of administrative lists for frame development, improving group quarters identification and classification, and improving service based enumeration of people without a usual home.

For the GQ frame building, we need to explore the use of selected administrative records to update the Census 2000 list of SP/GQs before conducting pre-census field address list development operations.

Regarding revised GQ types definitions and classifications, we need to assess how effective these revised definitions and classifications are for classifying GQs and in distinguishing between HUs and GQs.

For Service Base Enumeration (shelters, soup kitchens, and mobile food vans), we need to study conducting a complete enumeration of these locations twice in a short period of time to see if there is any coverage improvement; identify operational issues; and determine if we can unduplicate effectively.

Preliminary Plans for the 2006 Overseas Census Test

We intend to conduct our second overseas census test in 2006. Our two preliminary test objectives are:

- o To assess the operational issues involved in attempting to integrate the 2006 Overseas test results with the 2006 Stateside census test processes.
- o To further develop, refine, and assess methods to count U.S. citizens abroad.

The methodology for the 2006 test has not yet been set, nor have the specific research questions and evaluation criteria. Areas that are likely to be addressed, however, include unduplicating the stateside and overseas results, residence rules, military enumeration, and increased use of administrative records.